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PEACE.

A POEM.

Οὐκ ἐθέλω πλεῖεῖν, ἐκ εὔχομαι· ἀλλά μοι εἴη
Ζῆν ἀπὸ τῶν ὀλίγων, μηδὲν ἐχουῖι κακον. THEOG.

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PEACE.

A POEM.

RETIR'D from life, and it's experienc'd woes,
Unfaithful friends, conceal'd and open foes,
A Sage there liv'd, who wiſh'd to 'ſcape from ſtrife,
Deſpis'd the paſt, and hop'd in future life;
Ne'er in his breaſt Miſanthropy aroſe,
Old yet not teſty, wiſe but not moroſe;
That youth to follies was allied he knew,
Caution'd againſt 'em, but excus'd them too;
Nor ſaid that all men wou'd their truſt miſuſe,
Not friends forbad, but bade with caution chuſe;

Profit, he ſaid, was ſought at firſt with loſs;
And pureſt gold is always mix'd with droſs:
Thus Vice and Virtue you at firſt confound,
And meet ten rogues, e'er one juſt man is found.
Thus he at large inform'd the liſt'ning throng,
The right to follow, and avoid the wrong.

But one there was his more peculiar care,
A comely ſtripling, as his Virtue fair:
Such in his youthful days had been the Sage,
E'er markt with furrows by the hand of age;
E'er ſilver hairs, his ſhaking head had deck'd,
And Admiration ſunk into Reſpect.
Him the good man regarded as his ſon,
And taught the ways of miſery to ſhun.
Each day the Pupil heard him,—with ſurprize
Still fix'd upon the Sage his wond'ring eyes,

And ſtep by ſtep in dumb attention went,
Whilſt on his arm the tott'ring teacher leant.

At length the Sage, to weakneſs fall'n a prey,
Felt Death approaching, and his ſtrength decay:
The youth he call'd, and twice eſſay'd to ſpeak,
Whilſt the ſlow tear ſtole gently down his cheek;
At length compos'd; "Farewell! (he feebly ſaid)
"I, ſoon at eaſe, ſhall reſt among the dead,
"Of fourſcore years of pain I feel the End.
"To theſe laſt precepts ſeriouſly attend:—
"Seek not, my ſon, to change thy preſent ſtate,
"Nor vainly wiſh to emulate the great;
"Avoid extremes of poverty, or wealth;
"Content alone gives happineſs and health.

"Life, when 'tis ſubject to miſhaps controul,
"Goes ling'ring onward, to its deſtin'd Goal;

"The

" The wretch who wiſhes to be free from woes,
" Finds with what ſlow, and leaden ſteps, it goes;
" Each moment feels, but feels without relief,
" Day brings not comfort, and Night ſooths not grief:
" If on the Body ſleep ſome reſt beſtows,
" That reſt but gives increaſe of life, and woes;
" Nor does the Soul, though tir'd and tortur'd, deign
" To yield to peace this neceſſary reign,
" But frames ideal, unexperienc'd woes,
" And fills with fearful dreams the wiſh'd repoſe.
" Such is the ſtate of man by cares oppreſt,
" Such pangs torment, the great, and guilty breaſt.

" Nor does the Hind know peace, to Labor bred,
" Who quits for daily toil his truckle bed,
" Who ſleeps but little, eats the coarſeſt food,
" And labors hardly for another's good;

" Drudging

" Drudging for dainties, which he never taſtes, "
" Rearing with labor, what profuſion waſtes.
" Who, if by ſuff'ring heat, and cold, he gains
" A little treaſure dearly bought by pains,
" Loſs of that pittance too is doom'd to mourn,
" *From his hard hands by indirection torn.*
" Who ſuff'ring miſery his thought employs,
" In envying eaſe, the heighth of human joys;
" Can he then envy who ne'er taſted eaſe?
" He feeling miſery, envies what he ſees.

" Thus then in poverty no peace is found,
" Peace cannot reign where diſcontents abound.
" Nor art thou, Peace, more frequently poſſeſt,
" By high oppreſſors than the low oppreſt;
" They too are doom'd loſt treaſures to deplore,
" By Fortune pillag'd, as by them the poor:

" The rich and poor alike diſtreſſes find,
" The poor, of body,—and the rich, of mind.

" Some wiſh by future ages to be known,
" And with aſſiduous ardor court renown,
" Then think (if founded by the Trump of Fame)
" The liſt'ning world will hear with praiſe their name,
" But keen Detraction like an Eaſtern wind,
" Blaſts the wiſht harveſt of the lab'ring mind.
" Or if with greatneſs and with riches bleſt,
" They think too little, or too much poſſeſt,
" Whether their views, to ſquander or increaſe,
" Sorrow purſues them, whilſt they fly from Peace;
" Alike the luſcious board by Lux'ry ſpread,
" And wine that turns to madneſs in the head,
" Will baniſh Peace; whilſt in her ſtead remain,
" Long nights of Horror, and ſharp days of Pain.

" Nor

" Nor leſs the cares of thoſe, who thirſt for Wealth,
" Devoid of comfort, and bereft of Health,
" Their ſhatter'd nerves anxiety unſtrings,
" And each new ſcheme, more care than profit brings;
" Miſers alarm'd by each faint noiſe they hear,
" Alike the loſs of life and riches fear;
" Av'rice ſuſpects each guſt of wind a Thief,
" And gloomy fear confirms the falſe belief.
" The Gameſter trembles for the ſhaking Die,
" Now drops, now raiſes up his haggard Eye,
" Whilſt various madneſs rends his tortur'd breaſt,
" By loſſes frantic now, and now depreſt:
" Spendthrifts, and Miſers, both themſelves oppreſs,
" Fly, or ſeek ruin, dread, or feel diſtreſs.

" Peace with uncertainty can never be,
" Nor from uncertainty is greatneſs free;

" They

" They moſt fear falling, who are higheſt plac'd,
" And like all fav'rites, Fortunes are diſgrac'd.

" But in that ſtate which holds the middle way,
" To neither Pomp, nor Poverty a prey,
" Who wait not ſuppliant at Oppreſſion's door,
" Nor fear the heav'n-heard curſes of the Poor,
" Whoſe tranquil minds no anxious troubles toſs,
" With hope of profit, or with fear of loſs;
" Who are to unmoleſted comforts born,
" Beneath mens envy, and above their ſcorn;
" Who all the joys of guileleſs Friendſhip prove,
" Nor fear falſe flatt'ry in the maſk of love;
" What greater bliſs to man, can fortune grant?
" They wiſh no Luxury, they fear not Want:
" No turn of Fortune can affect their reſt,
" Serenely happy, and ſecurely bleſt.

" The

" The chearful day, with mirth and reaſon join'd,
" Nights fearleſs ſleep, its guard a quiet mind,
" Show, that ſoft Peace, (~~that~~ which flies the low and great,
" Unknown to poverty, and loſt by ſtate)
" Can only with this happy few reſide,
" Who know like her nor Miſery nor Pride;
" And teach through ev'ry ſtate of life, alone
" When firſt Content is woed, that Peace is won:
" This Path purſue, let Virtue be your guide,
" And Peace will ſtill be found by Virtue's ſide."

Thus ſpoke the Sage, the ſtripling kiſs'd, then wept,
Groan'd, turn'd aſide, and with his fathers ſlept.

The Youth by nature juſt, and thus improv'd,
Liv'd, by all men admir'd, eſteem'd, and lov'd.
His Houſe, unlike the Manſions of the great,
With all convenience, but no ſigns of ſtate,

Bore not the ſhew of vanity, or wealth,
But all ſpoke, plenty, happineſs, and health.
Each morning found him, at the break of day,
Taking through ſcenes of poverty his way,
Seeking and comforting the ſons of grief,
His ſole attendants, Pity, and Relief:
Each hour in uſeful pleaſure he employ'd,
So varying Pleaſures that they never cloy'd;
Increaſe of Knowledge each day's reading brought,
And laſting Health in exerciſe he ſought.

A Wife he choſe in Virtues precepts bred,
Nor by Pride inſolent, or Vice miſled;
In whom to ſhew perfection, Fate combin'd
A Form Angelic, and a heav'nly Mind.
She never from her duty went aſtray,
Her Whim to pleaſe, her Pleaſure to obey;

But ſought in all her huſband's peace alone,
And ſeeking his ſhe ever found her own;
Whilſt he ſtill govern'd with ſo light a hand,
Her vow'd obedience, never felt command.

Some choſen friends he had, but only thoſe
Whom Senſe approv'd of, and whom Virtue choſe;
Endow'd with humour, livelineſs, and ſenſe,
Unmixt with folly, noiſe, or inſolence.
Happy with theſe, his jovial hours he ſpent,
Pleas'd at their mirth, and with their joys content.
Thus did he live, the ſweets combin'd, to prove,
Of ſocial friendſhip, and of virtuous love;
No idle Pomp conſum'd his little ſtore,
And no baſe falſhood made that little, more;
No dire remorſe lay cank'ring in his breaſt,
No ſtings of Conſcience broke his balmy reſt;

But from all Vice, from all Intemp'rance clear,
Health and Content ſtill bleſt each circling year;
While taſting all the bliſs to mortals giv'n,
He found in Peace, th' Epitome of Heav'n.

FINIS.